RECRUIT TRAINING COMMAND—GREAT LAKES

Great Lakes was commissioned as a Naval Training Station on 1 July 1911, received its first trainee two days later, and was officially dedicated by President William Howard Taft on that first recruit's graduation day, 28 October 1911.

The mission of recruit training at Great Lakes has varied little since its early days, but the facilities and the techniques have changed significantly over the years at Great Lakes to meet constantly changing needs.

The original thirty-nine building complex provided facilites for 600 recruits undergoing sixteen weeks of training.

More than 125,000 World War I sailors began service in the Navy at Great Lakes. Emergency build-ups brought the number of buildings to 775 with a capacity of 50,000 men on a twelve-week training schedule.

Depression years saw Great Lakes at a standstill; but World War II saw a rapid expansion program to relieve strained facilities. A growth to almost 1,000 buildings was able to handle a peak on-board count of 67,000 recruits as Great Lakes trained almost 1,000,000 men for the fleet. At one point, the demand for more men was so great that training curriculum was a highly-accelerated three weeks.

The normal post-war recruit population has been 10,000 with significant increases during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.

Women for the regular Navy were trained at Great Lakes from 1948 to 1957, taking a ten-week WAVE training course.

The recruit curriculum changed in 1973 from a seven-week to a nine-week period of training.

An advanced training period of twelve days was implemented for seamen, firemen, and airmen rates so that those who leave Great Lakes and go directly to the fleet would be more adequately prepared for their duties.

The staff under peacetime conditions is made up of thirty-seven officers and 500 enlisted men to train an all-volunteer force of 35,000 recruits annually.

The true meaning of discipline is not punishment but that development of self-control and teamwork which enables men to strive for perfection and accomplish greatness.

MISSION

The Mission of Recruit Training Command is to provide a training program which will:
—effect a smooth transition from civilian to Navy life
—foster patriotic behavior
—affirm the dignity of the individual
—encourage high standards of personal responsibility, conduct, manners, and morals
—create a desire for self-improvement and advancement
—provide the recruit with knowledge and skills which are basic to all naval personnel
—develop pride in unit and the Navy and a desire to observe appropriate naval customs, ceremonies, and traditions
—provide the Department of the Navy with personnel possessing an effective level of physical fitness

NAVY CREDO

The United States Navy is responsible for maintaining control of the sea and is a ready force on water at home and overseas, capable of strong action to preserve the peace or instant offensive action to win in war.

It is upon the maintenance of this control that our country's glorious future depends. The United States Navy exists to make it so.

Tradition, valor, and victory are the Navy's heritage from the past. To these may be added dedication, discipline, and vigilance as the watchwords of the present and future.

At home or on distant stations we serve with pride, confident in the respect of our country, our shipmates, and our families.

Our responsibilities sober us; our adversities strengthen us.

Service to God and country is our special privilege. We serve with honor.

The Navy will always employ new weapons, new techniques, and greater power to protect and defend the United States on the sea, under the sea, and in the air.

Now and in the future, control of the sea gives the United States her greatest advantage for the maintenance of peace and for victory in war.

Mobility, surprise, dispersal, and offensive power are the keynotes to the new Navy. The roots of the Navy lie in a strong belief in the future, in continued dedication to our tasks, and in reflection on our heritage from the past. Never have our opportunities and our responsibilities been greater.

"For the 40th time . . ."

"They teach us to march . . . .

. . . and march . . .

. . . and march."

COMPANY COMMANDER

A Company Commander is a father, mother, counselor, and disciplinarian. He instructs the men of his company in the proper procedures for keeping their compartment as well as their personal appearance — trim, neat, clean and well-balanced.

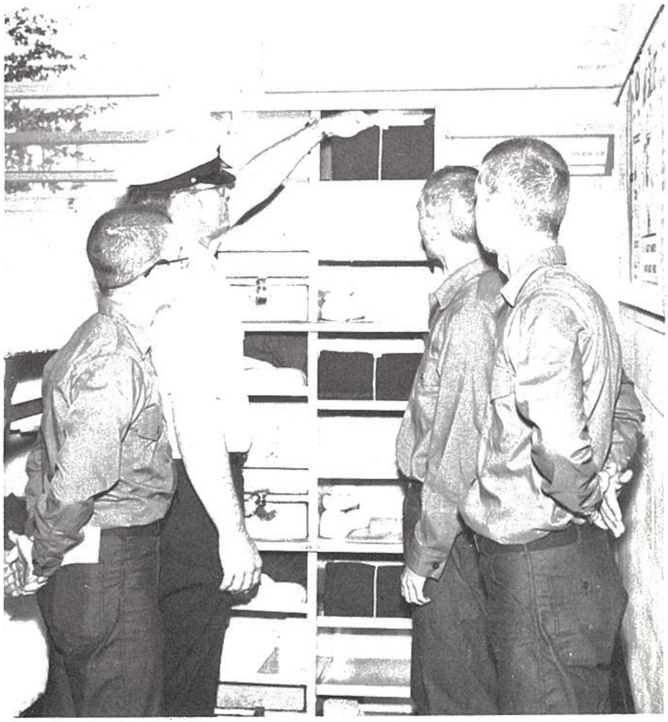
Making the rack

Putting together the combination cover

Learning to fold clothes

Stowing the locker

Stenciling



"This is where it goes"

ASMO'S

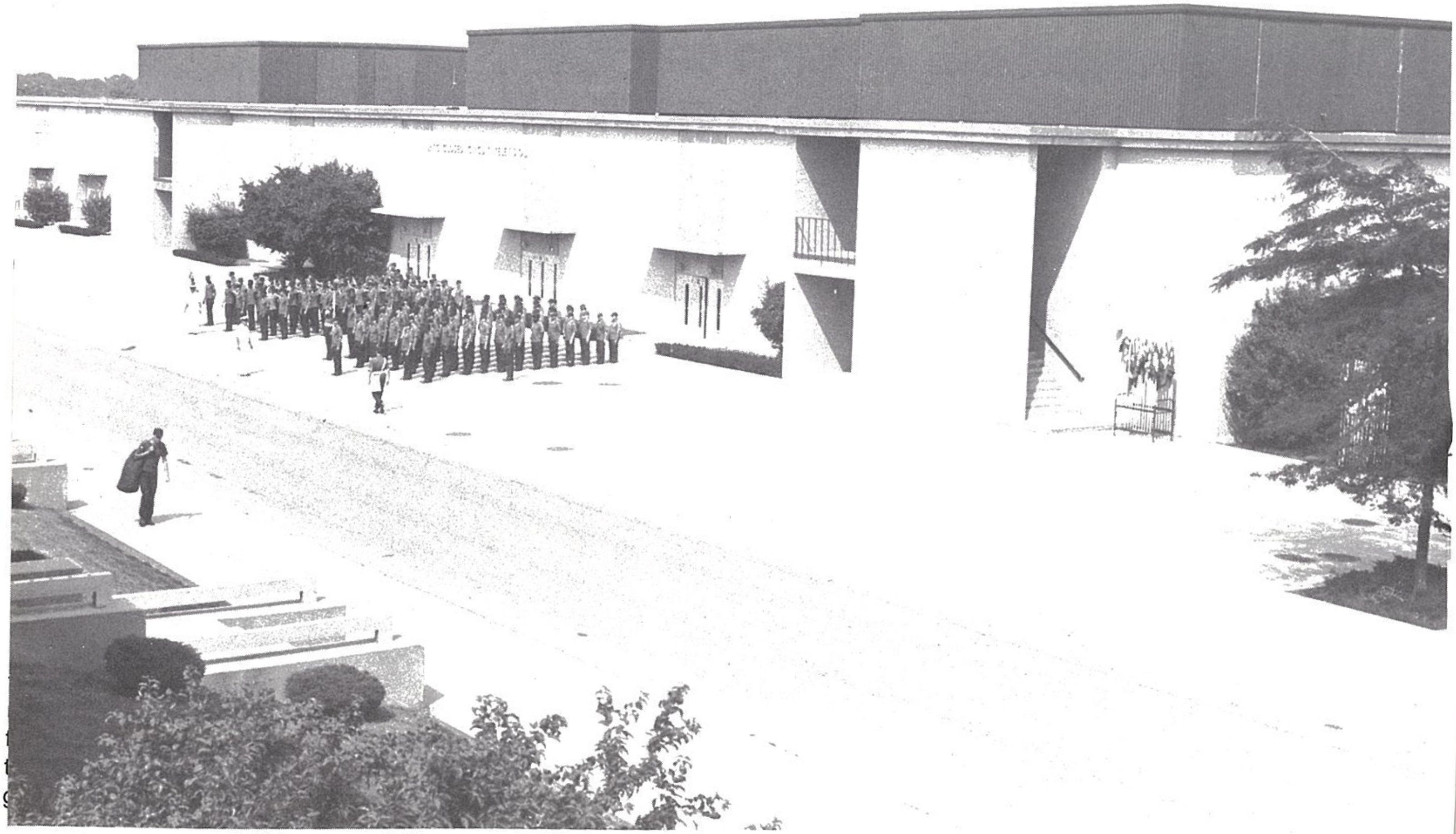
(Assignment Memorandum Orders)

Because of the closeness he feels to his fellow recruits, it is difficult for a recruit to "lose his company." Though he might be "ASMO-ed" for violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice or disciplinary reasons, it is more likely that a recruit is re-assigned to a later—formed company because of failed tests or a need for remedial reading work. Or, he might be hospitalized due to illness or an accident. It is not easy for a recruit to leave his friends in his original company; but it is a mark of maturity when he can make new friends in another company and work with them to attain that ultimate goal of graduation to the fleet.

Command Reception Center

A place to get the facts

Regularly scheduled classes are provided to discuss the problems of drug and alcohol abuse and to outline Navy policies regarding this subject. This center is open evenings to provide recruits with counseling and additional information, offering discussions and movies on these matters.

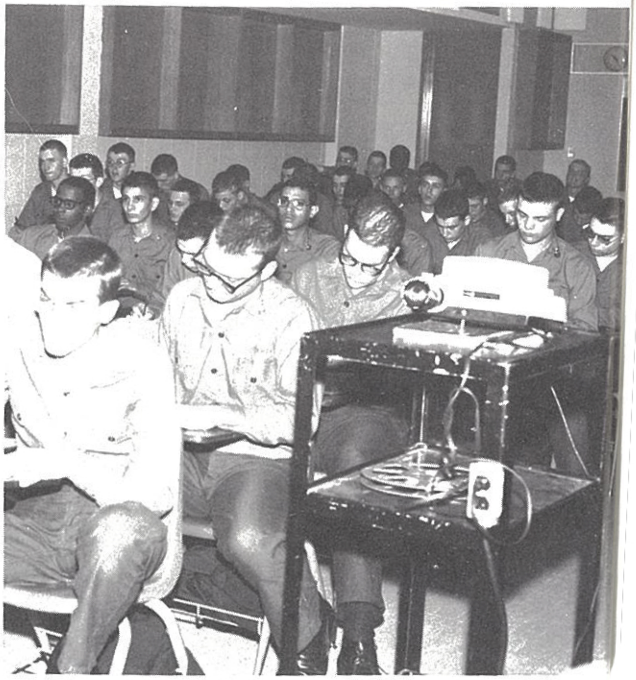


RECRUITS SPEND MANY HOURS IN CLASSES

Each recruit spends many training hours in the classroom. He studies and is tested on the traditional skills of the Navy such as Navy time, watch standing, and the command organization of ships and other Navy units. He is also schooled in the Uniform Code of Military Justice and in the history, courtesies, customs, ships, uniforms, and awards of the Navy.

On a more sociological plane, to ensure the proper rounding out of the modern sailor in the modern Navy, he is exposed to courses in Drug Awareness and Defensive Driving and he participates in Race Relations seminars to make him aware of reactions to other people and of their reactions to him.

Even though these activities do not lend themselves well to photographic reproduction, they are, nonetheless, a very vital and essential part of the recruit's preparation for service as a knowledgeable, skilled, and active Navyman.



Visual training aids

STG1 J. E. VANHALL USN
COMPANY COMMANDER

THE COMPANY COMMANDER

. . . is an outstanding senior petty officer who has been selected as part of the corps of company commanders at Great Lakes. Prior to "picking up" his first company, he has been trained in techniques of instruction, principles of leadership, and administrative procedures in schools at Great Lakes Naval Training Center, both at Service School Command and at Recruit Training Command.

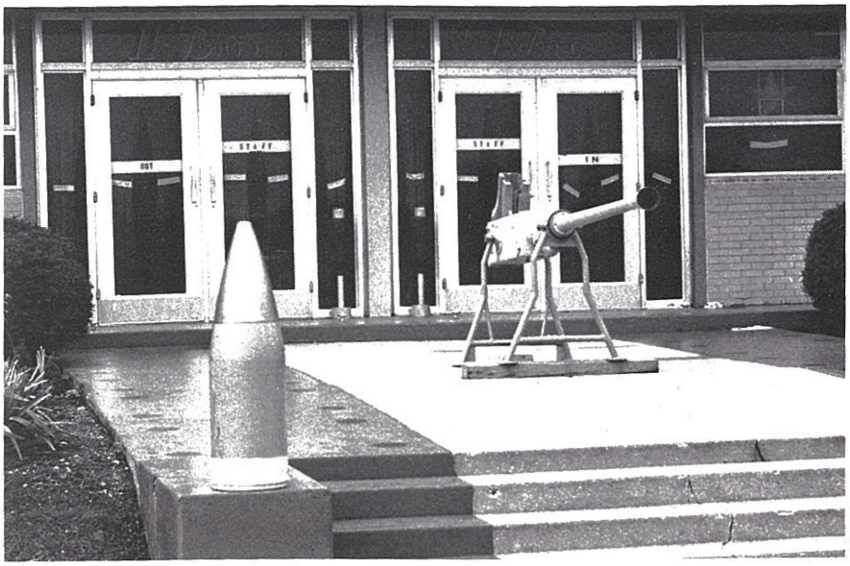
The company commander instructs his recruits how to keep themselves, their clothing, their equipment and their living quarters in a smart and shipshape manner while he leads them in military and physical drill so that they gain military proficiency and physical stamina. He also helps them to exercise increasing amounts of individual and group responsibility as they grow in the qualities of self-discipline necessary to carry out the exacting routines of life as men of the United States Navy.

The company commander is genuinely interested in the needs, welfare and problems of the recruits he commands. He must be formal yet friendly so that though he is fully and firmly in control, the recruits do not have to hesitate to approach him for his assistance with their problems or for his referral to the appropriate member of the Navy's professional corps: the chaplain, the medical officer or the legal officer.

The company commander, most of all, is an inspiring example of the successful Navyman upon whom the recruits can pattern their own lives as sailors and as citizens.

BARRACKS LIFE

One of the more important lessons the recruit learns during boot camp is how to live with others in a military organization. Life and living conditions in the Navy differ so greatly from anything he has known in civilian life that learning to live in close quarters as a member of a military group becomes a major function of recruit training.



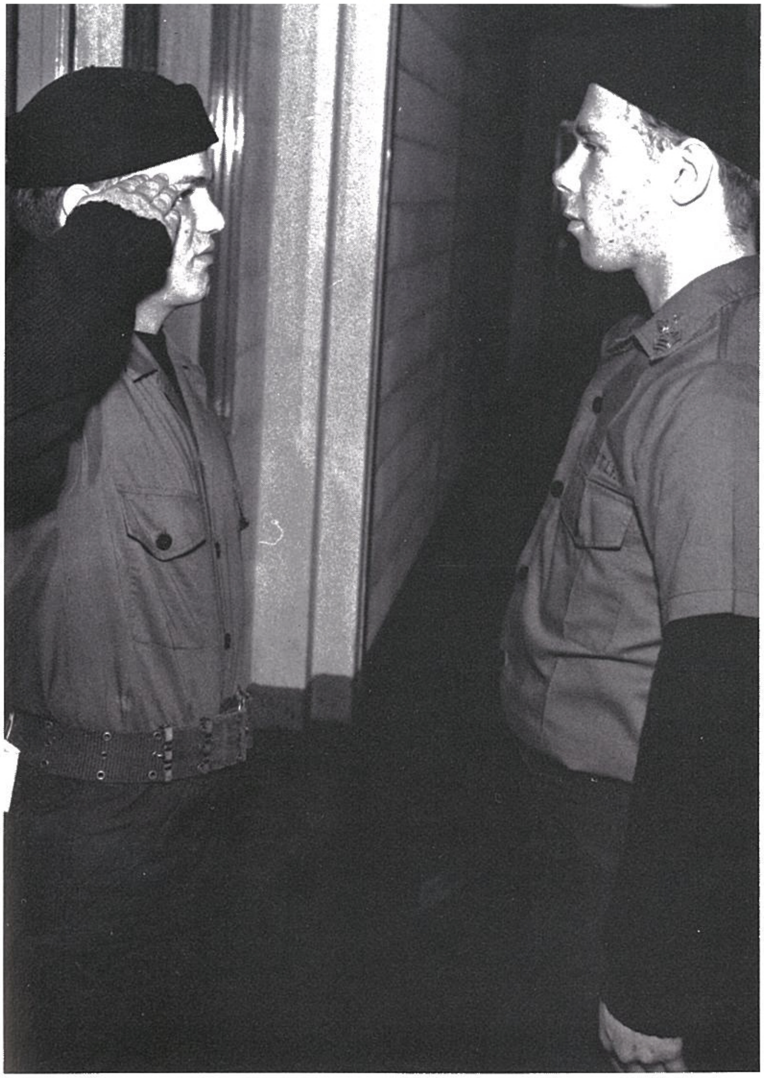
Battalion entrance

Quarterdeck

Individuals Photographed By
Glen Johnson

Activities Photographed By
Dave Rocknich

Layouts By
Dave Rocknich



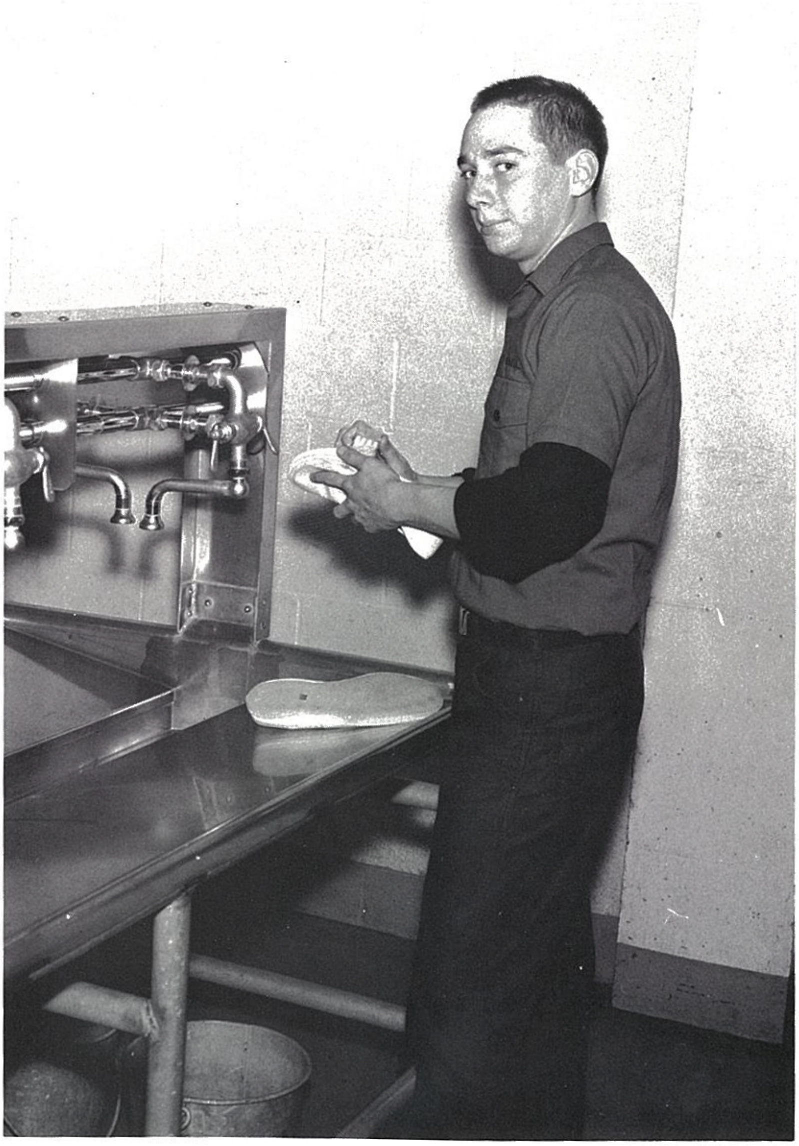
Relieve the watch

Inspection of the watch

General Orders

Stenciling out

Washing



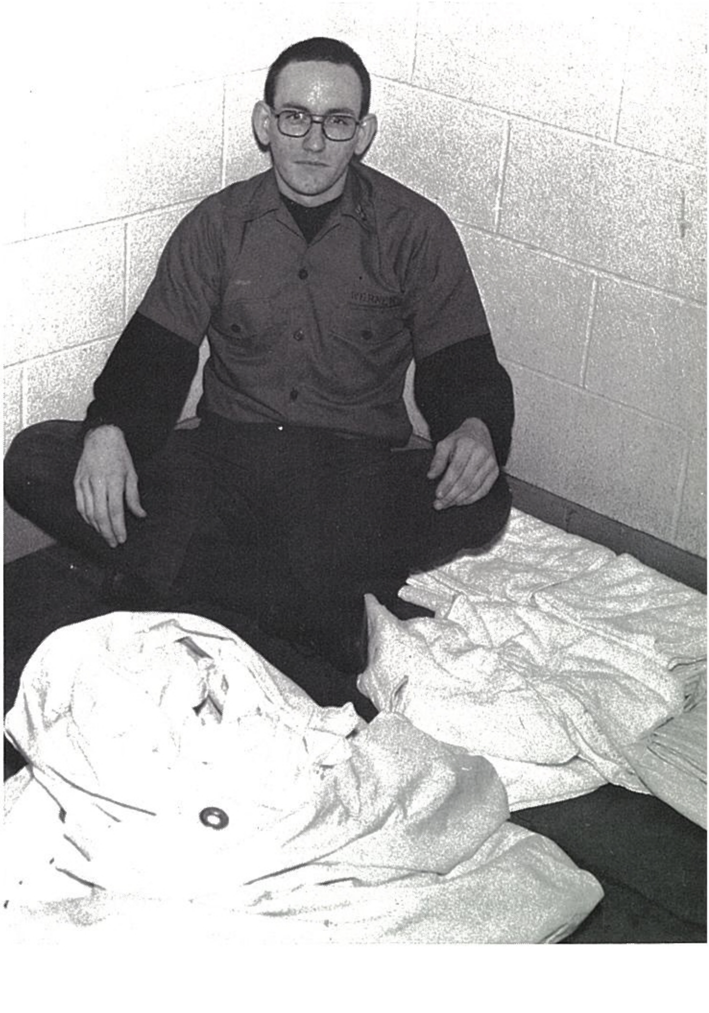
BARRACKS LIFE

The barracks is not only a place to sleep and to stow clothes, but it is also the most important classroom. Here, the recruit learns by doing. The scrubbing of clothes, the cleaning of the barracks and the constant inspections all serve but one purpose—to prepare him for a successful life during his tour in the Navy.

Sewing

Sorting laundry

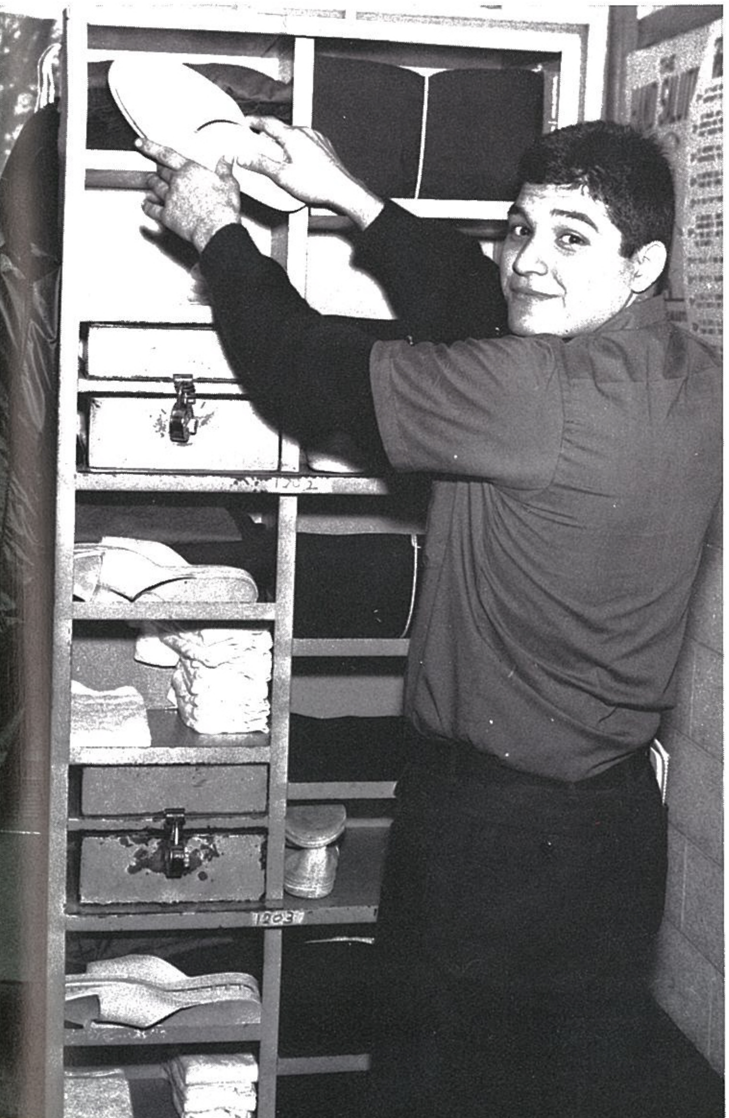
Sorting laundry



Ironing

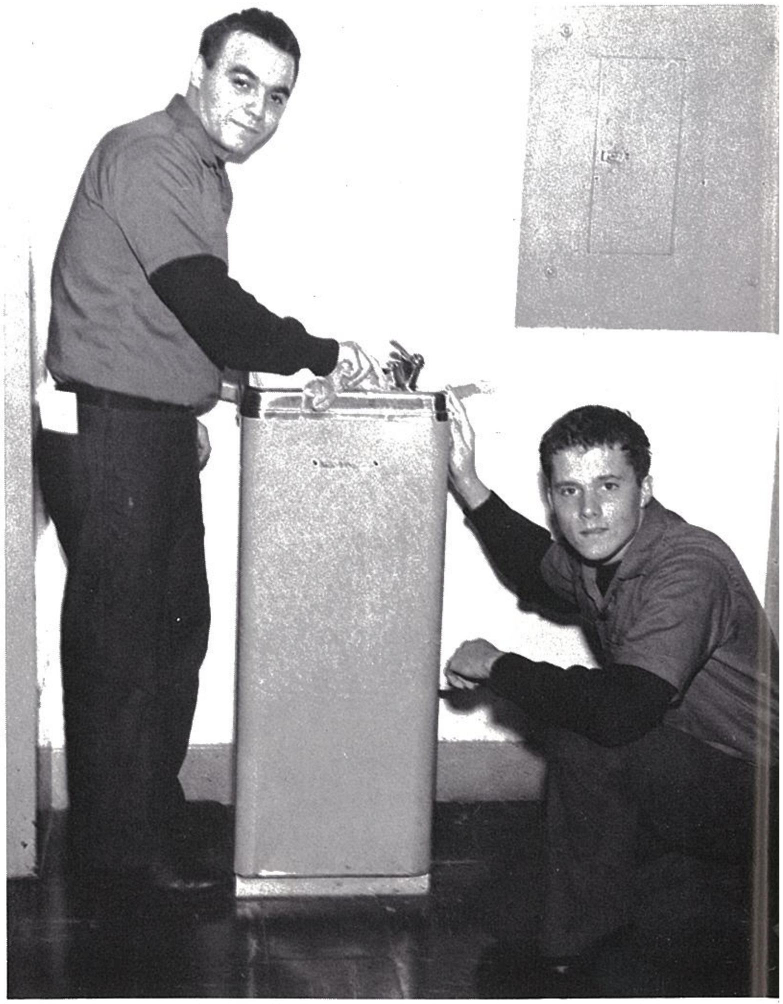
Folding

Stowing



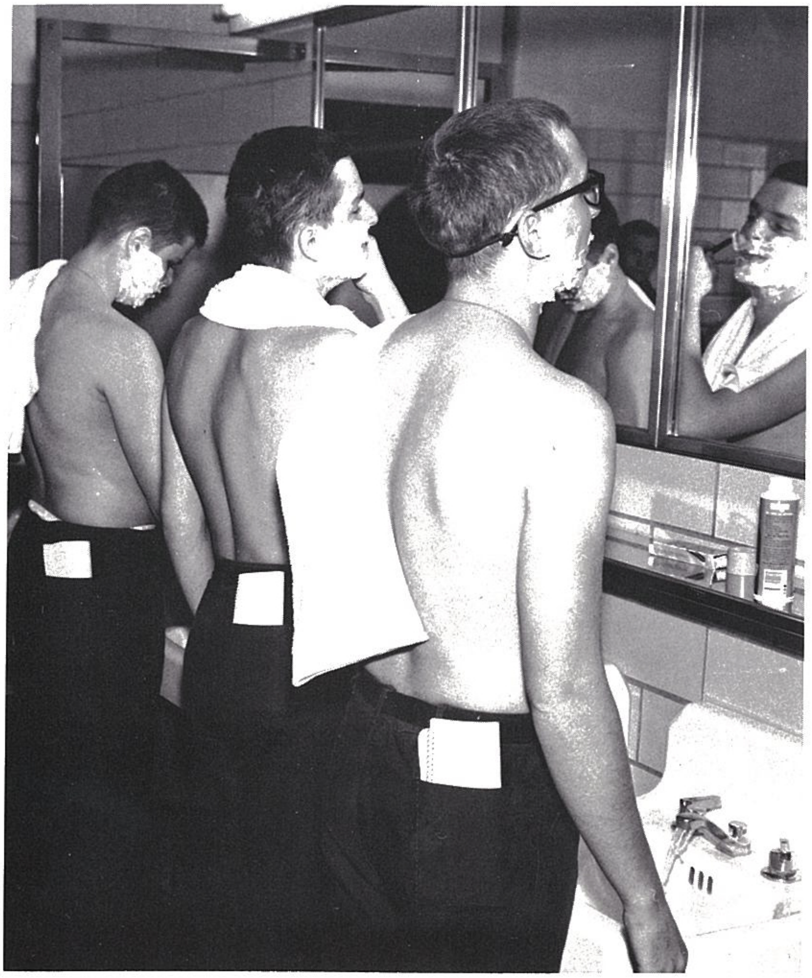
Locker inspection

Working party



Compartment field day

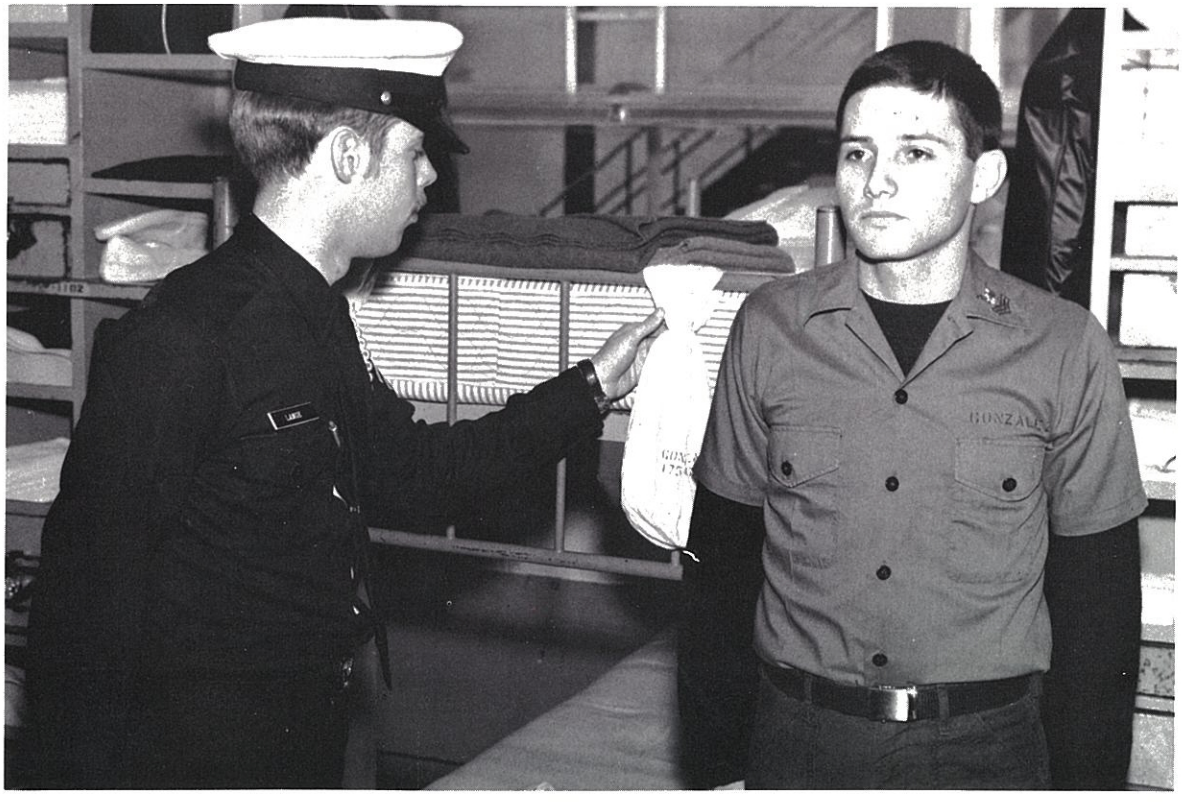
Forward hold

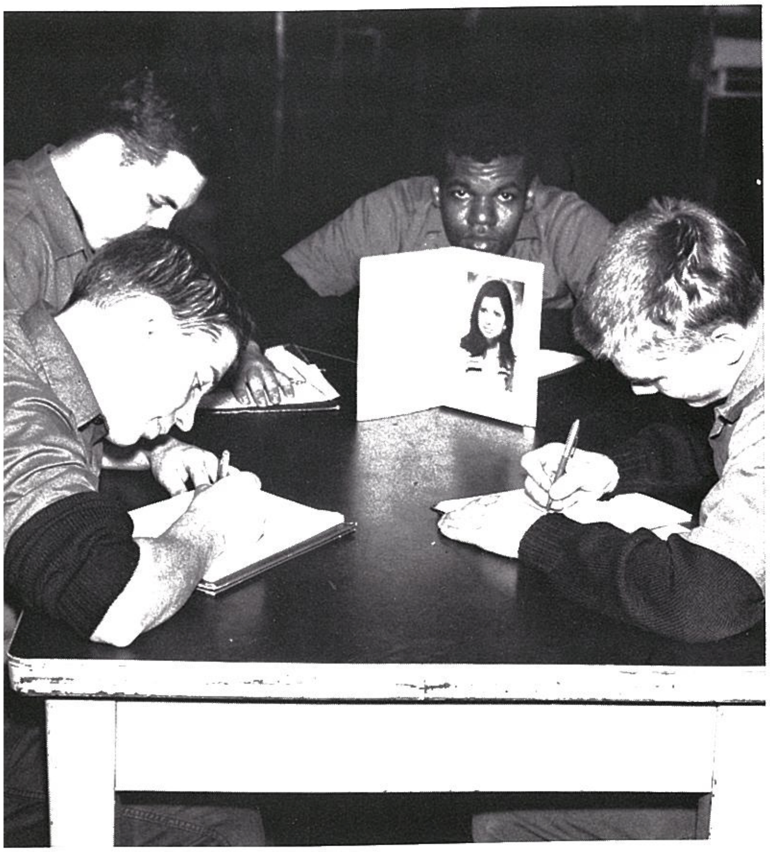


Shaving

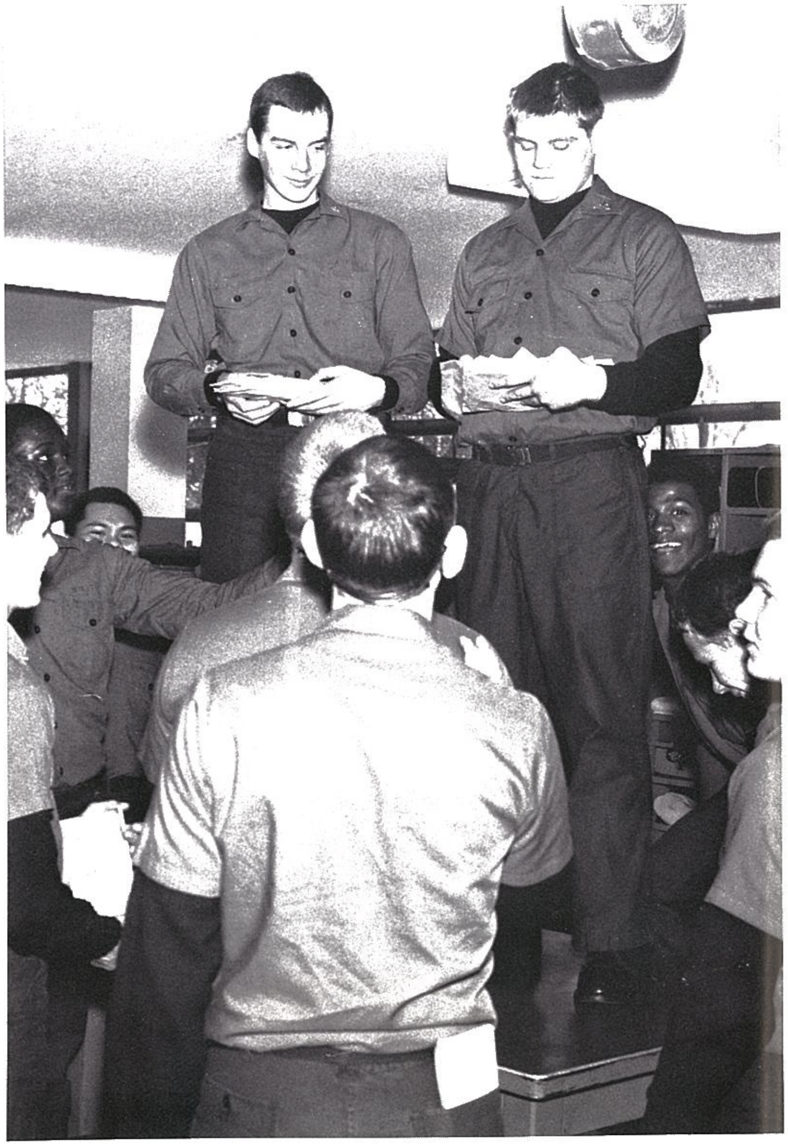
Spit & polish

Bunk inspection



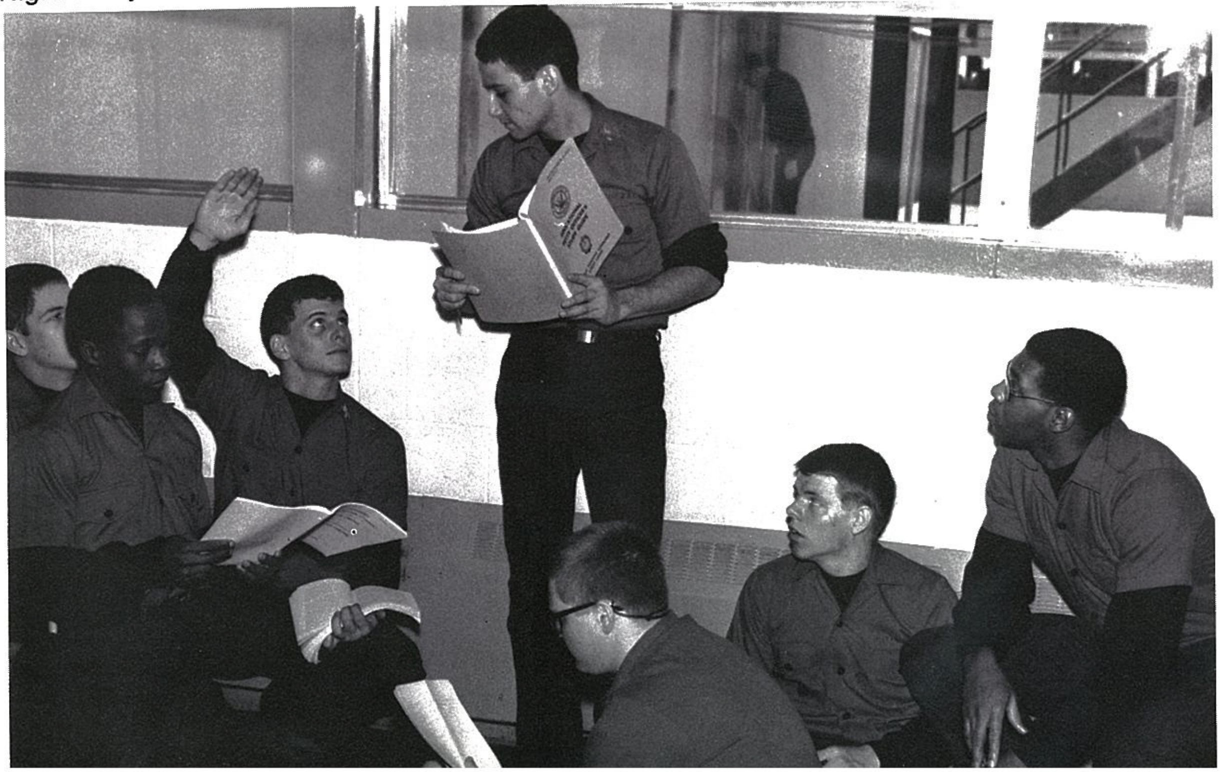


Letter time



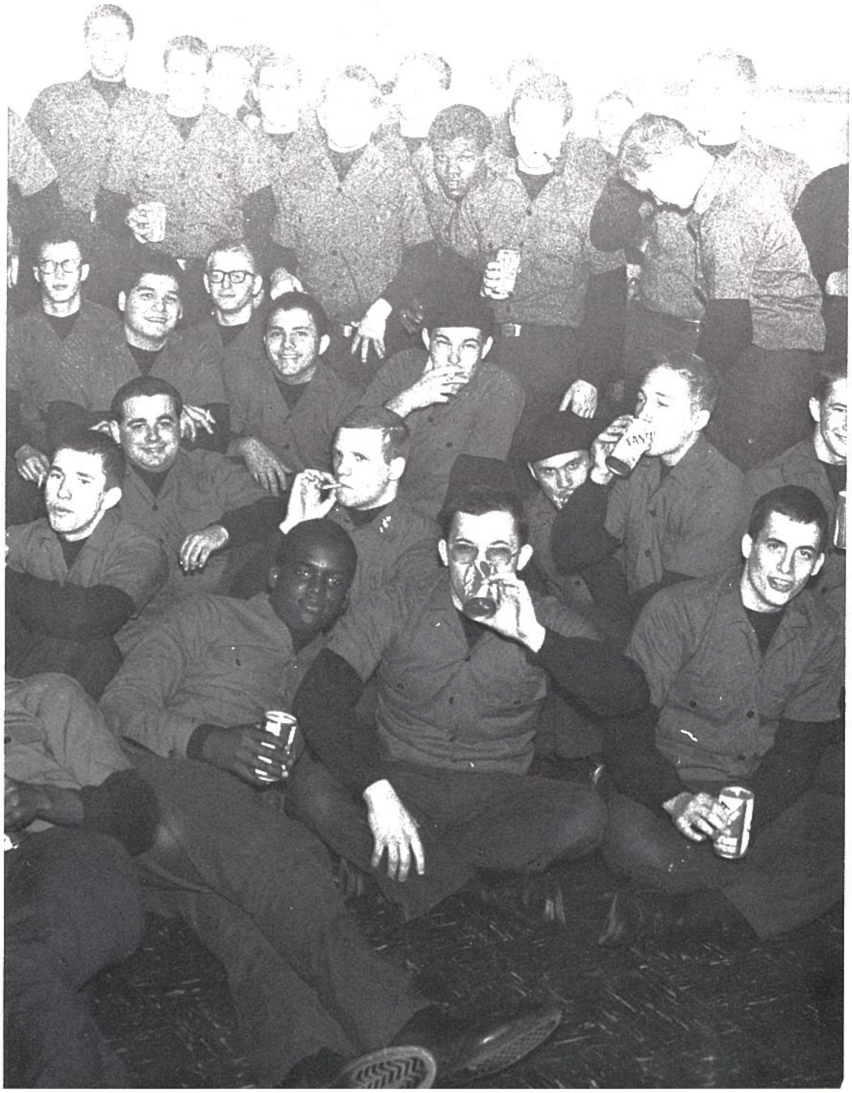
Mail call

Night study



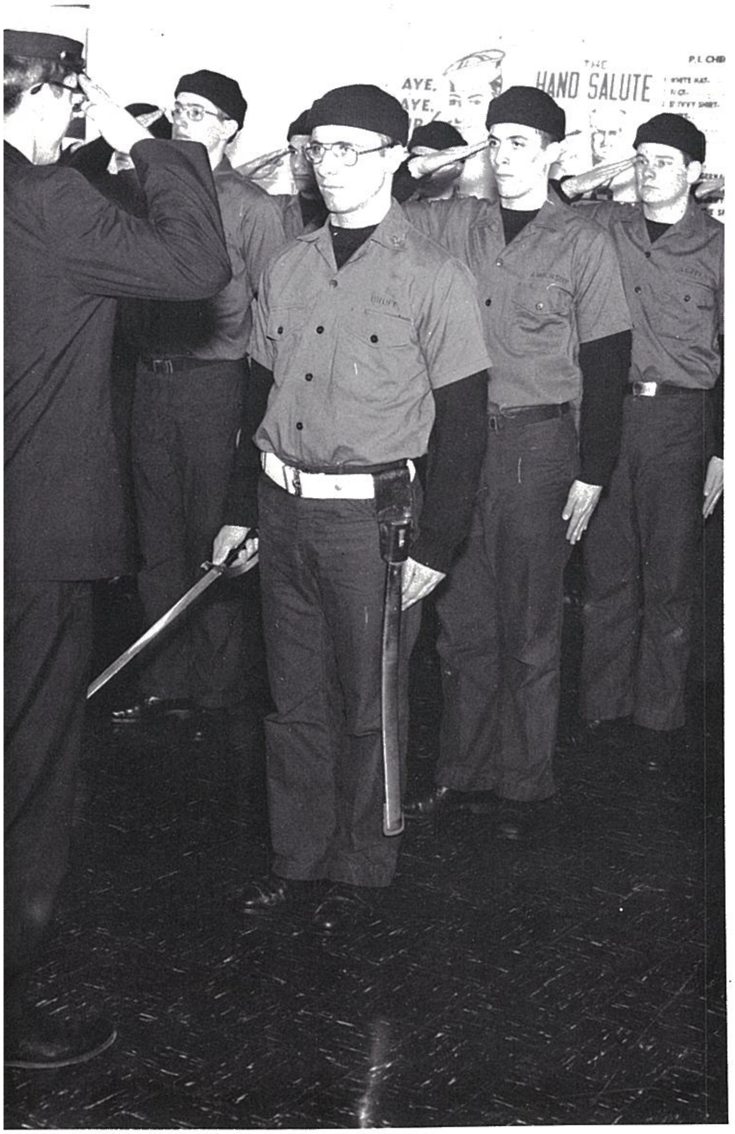
Smoke & coke

Smoke & coke



BARRACKS LIFE

All is not work in the barracks, for the recruit learns the need for fellowship and relaxation. Mail call is one of his most precious moments, and the time he takes to write home is time well spent.



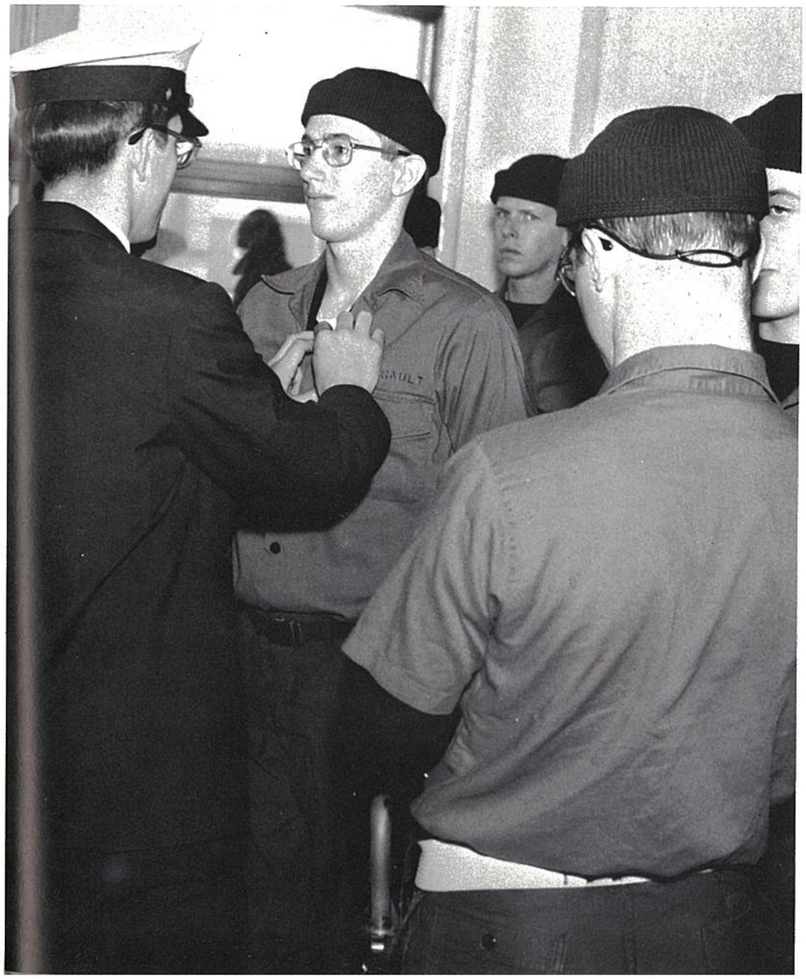
"Company ready for inspection, sir!"

Feet at 45°

Parade rest

Personnel inspection (dog tags)

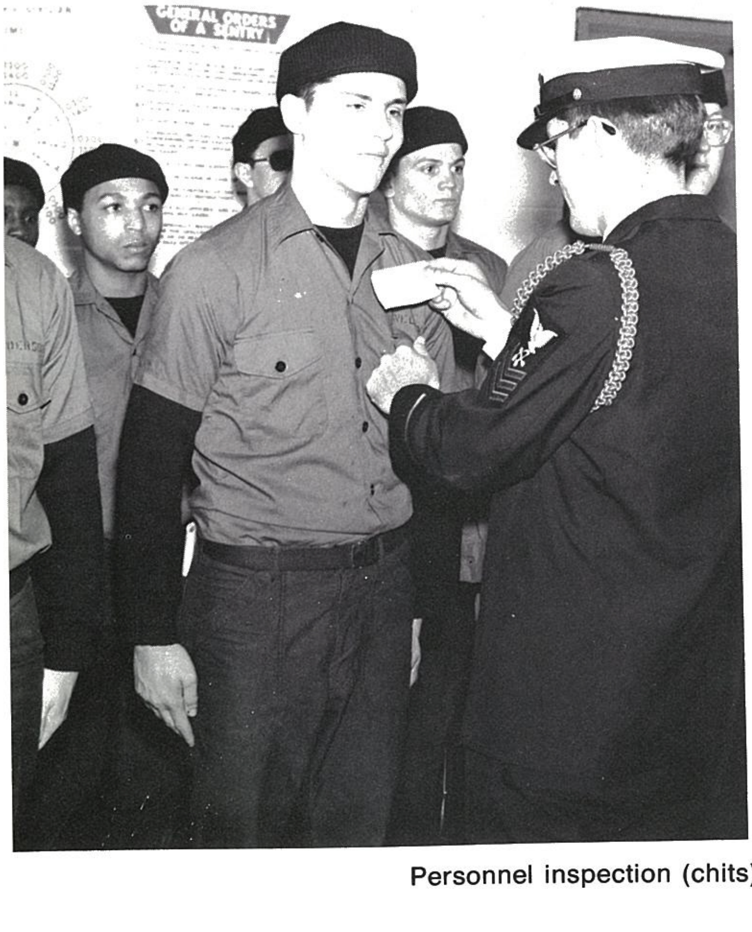
Personnel inspection (T-shirt)



Inspecting shoe shine

INSPECTIONS

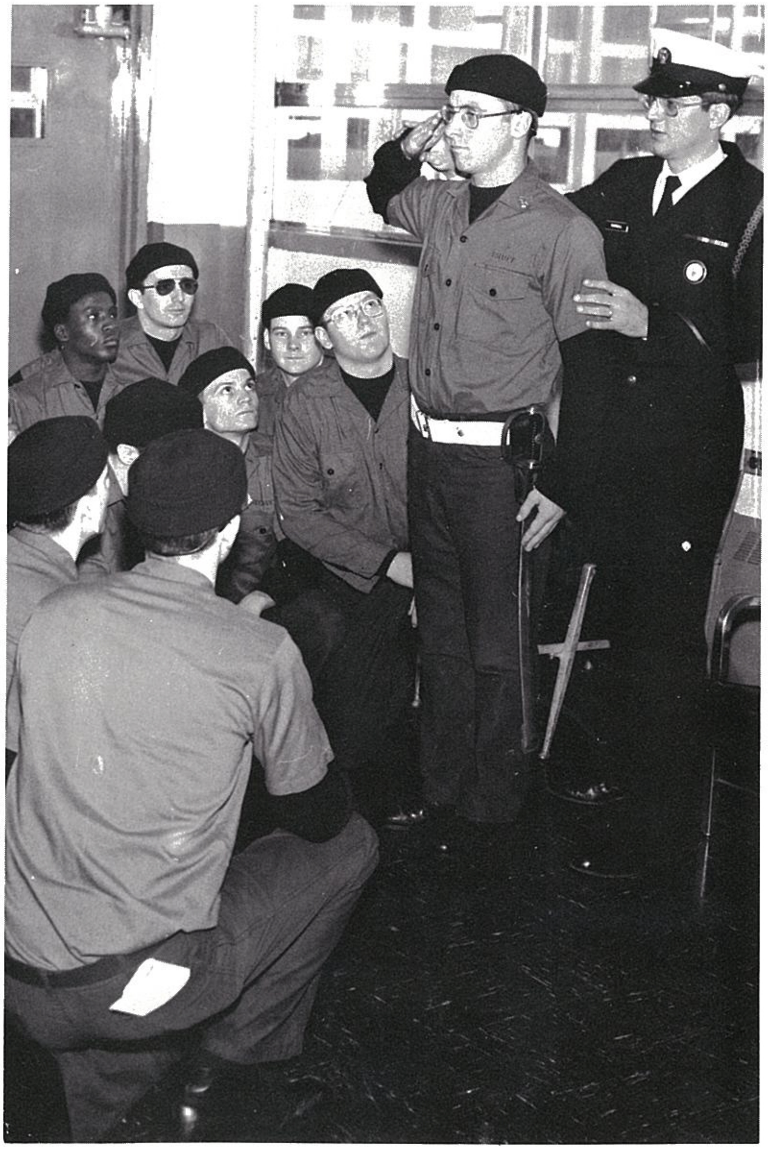
Dress right, dress



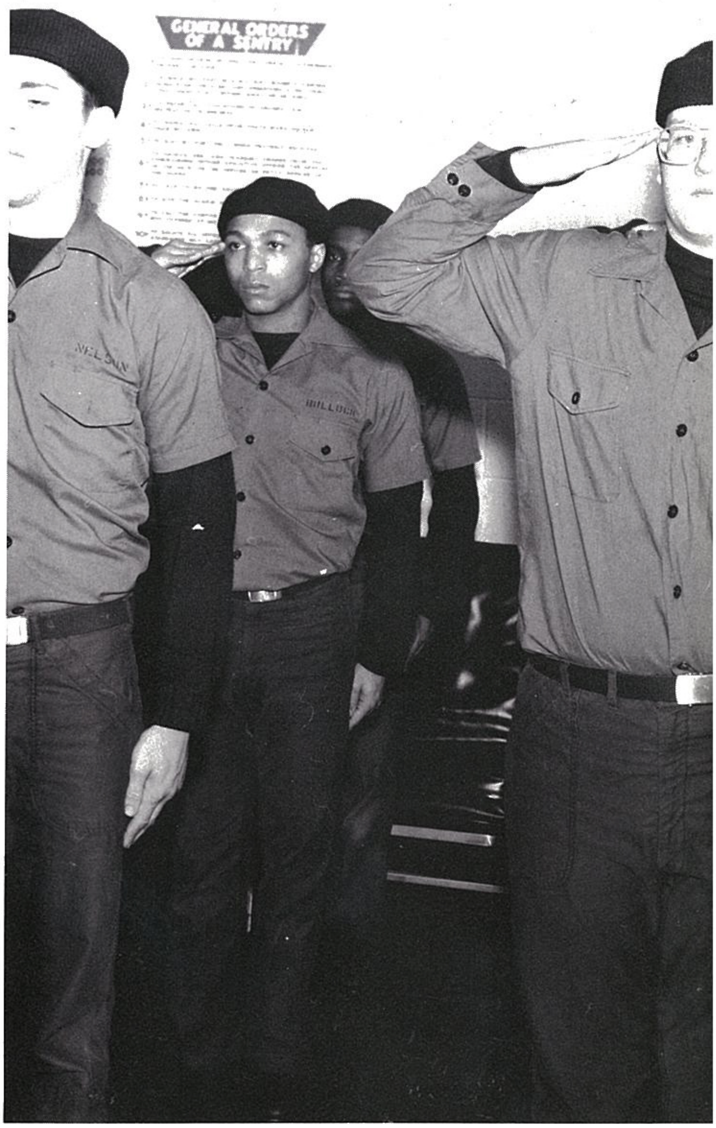
Personnel inspection (chits)

Personnel inspection (hat)

SALUTE



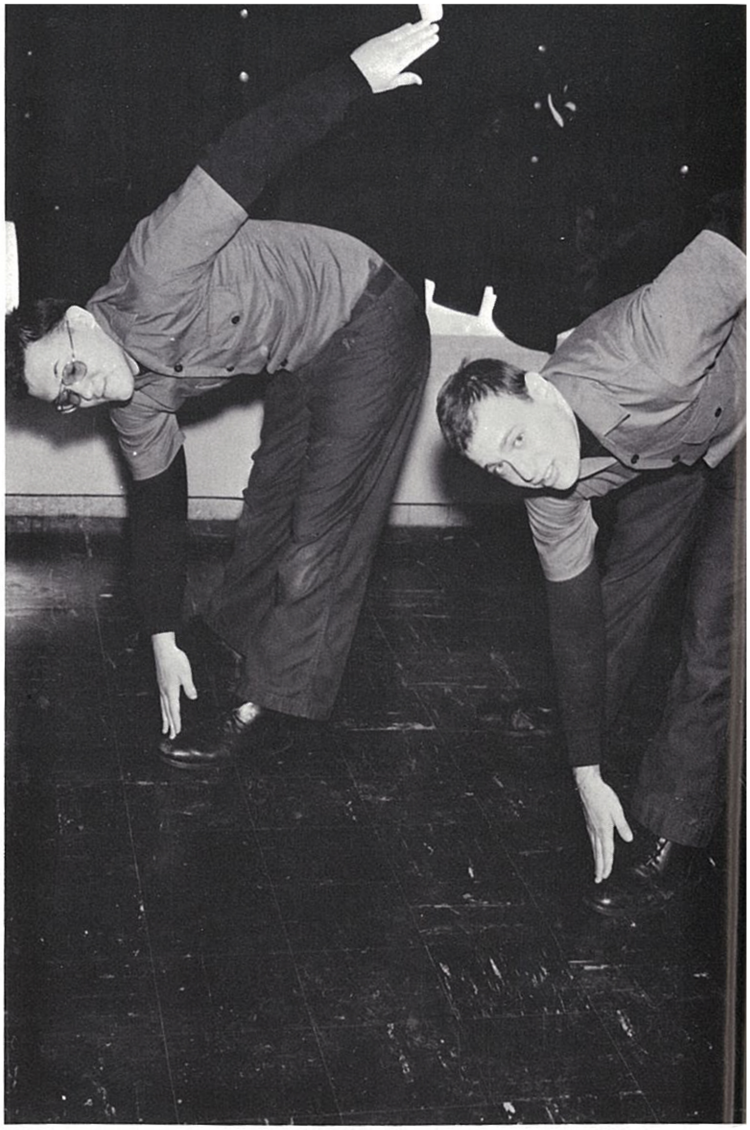
Demonstrating proper salute



Salute

The salute is symbolic of the traditions and customs of the Navy. This is but one discipline learned by the recruit as part of his physical and mental orientation, to help him develop pride in his personal conduct and military manner. He becomes more aware of his role as a sailor-citizen and of the Navy's role as part of the government of the United States and the peacekeeping military forces of the world.

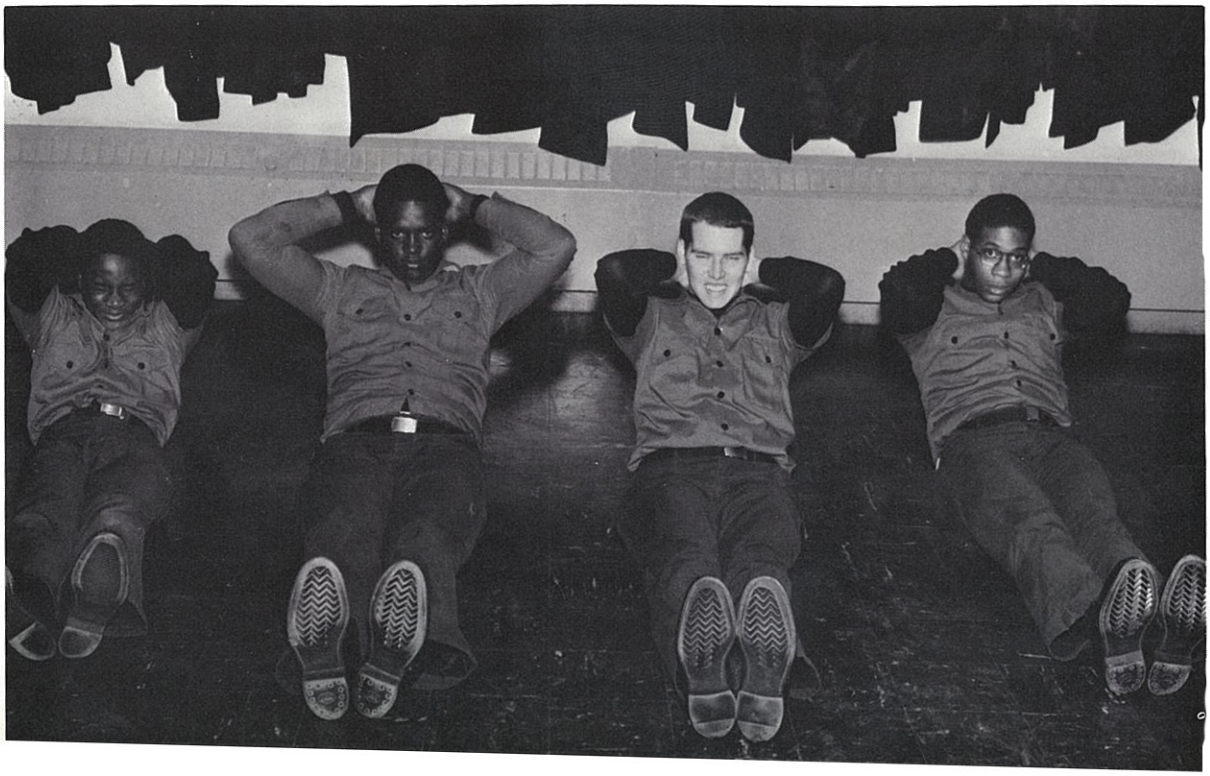
PHYSICAL TRAINING



Push-ups

Windmills

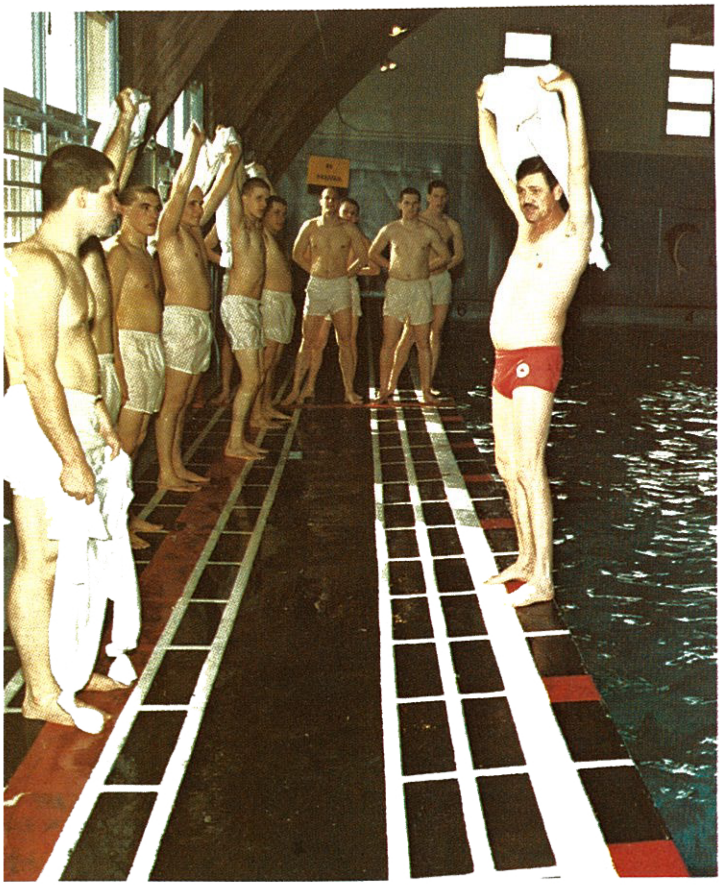
Sit-ups



WATER SURVIVAL TRAINING

A skill which is vital and basic to every sailor is swimming. All recruits spend many hours in the classroom and water survival training tanks (unofficially, swimming pools). Some are taught to swim; all are urged to learn to swim better. Particular emphasis is placed on "abandon ship" procedures and survival flotation.

"I hope it works"

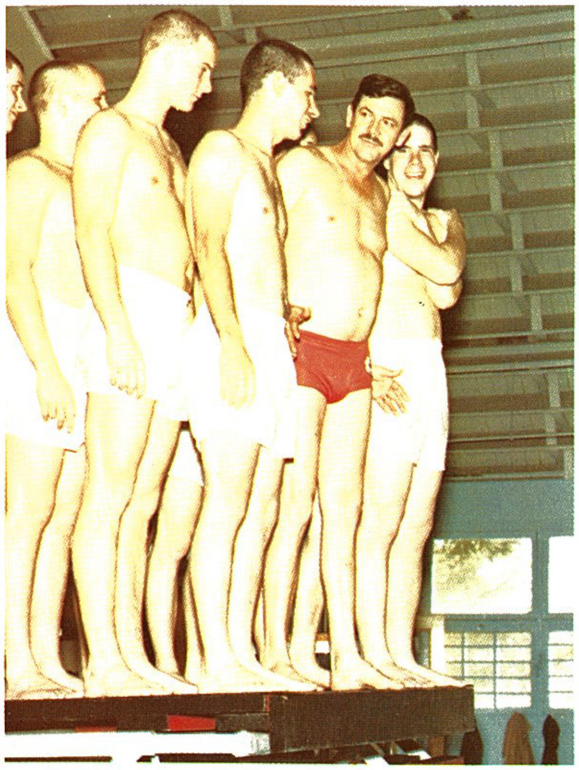


"This is how your pants keep you afloat"

"It did"

"Just dog paddle"

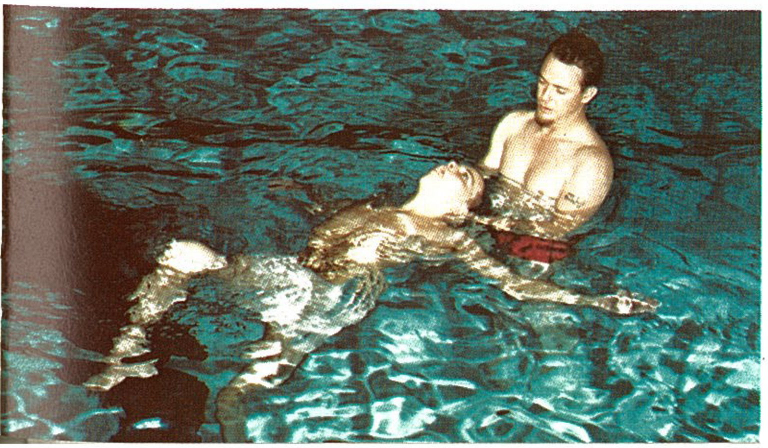
"When is it our turn?"



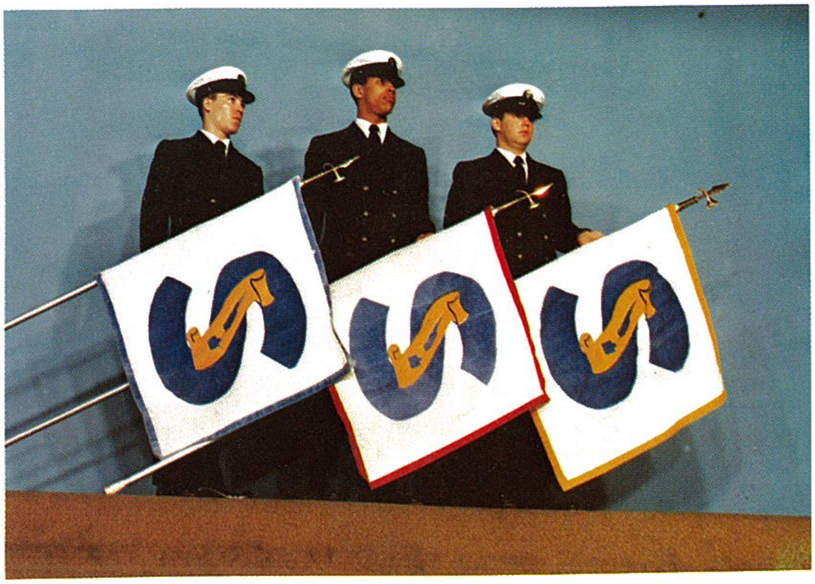
"You just step off"

Tower leap

"You're doing fine"

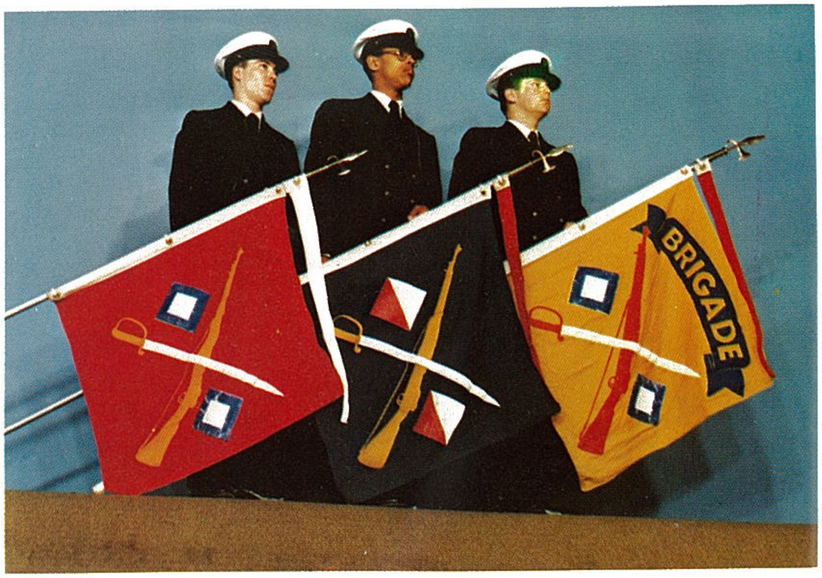


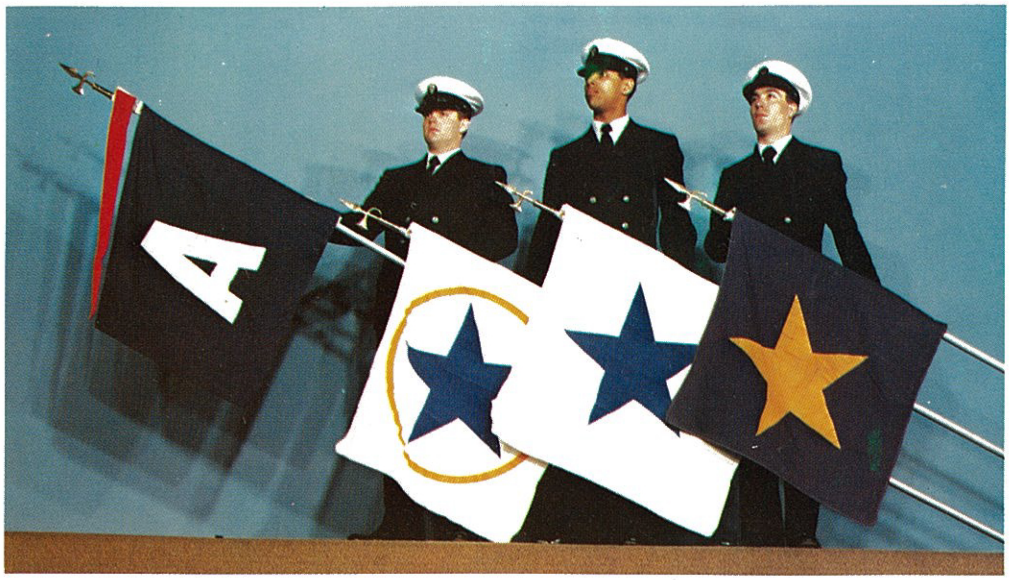
"S" FLAGS—The Battalion "S" Flag (Left) is awarded weekly to the company in each battalion scoring the highest on scholastic examinations. The Regimental "S" Flag (center) is won by the company which excels all other companies in each regiment. The Brigade "S" Flag (right) goes to the recruit company with the highest score among all the companies in training.



"E" FLAGS—"E" Flags (also known as "Efficiency Flags" or "Rooster Flags") are the symbols for overall excellence in a given week of training. Each company in a battalion has the opportunity of winning the weekly Battalion "E" Flag (left); the company with the highest score in a regiment also wins the Regimental Efficiency Flag (center); and the company with the highest score in recruit training wins the Brigade "Rooster" Flag (right).

DRILL FLAGS — Teamwork by recruits is rewarded weekly with Drill Flags for proficiency in close order drill. The Battalion Drill Flag (center) is won by the company in each battalion compiling the highest average in competition; the Regimental Drill Flag (left) by the company scoring highest in competition among Battalion Flag winners; and the Brigade Drill Flag (right) by the company in recruit training demonstrating the greatest proficiency.





"A" FLAG—Athletic superiority in team and individual events is recognized by the weekly presentation of an "A" Flag to the company within each battalion which achieves the most points.

STAR FLAGS— Star Flags are awarded weekly in the field of cleanliness as determined by barracks, locker, and personnel inspections conducted by a staff unit known as "Brigade Inspectors." The Battalion Star Flag (right) is for the winning company in each battalion; the Regimental Star Flag (center) for the winning company among Battalion Star Flag winners; and the Brigade Star Flag (left) for the company in recruit training compiling the highest overall average.

HALL OF FAME FLAG—A trophy accompanies this rarely-achieved flag; and the company is enshrined in the Recruit Training Command Hall of Fame. To receive this flag a company must have won the Color Company Flag and three "E" Flags, five Drill Flags, five Star Flags, five "S" Flags, one "A" Flag, plus a combination of any four additional flags.

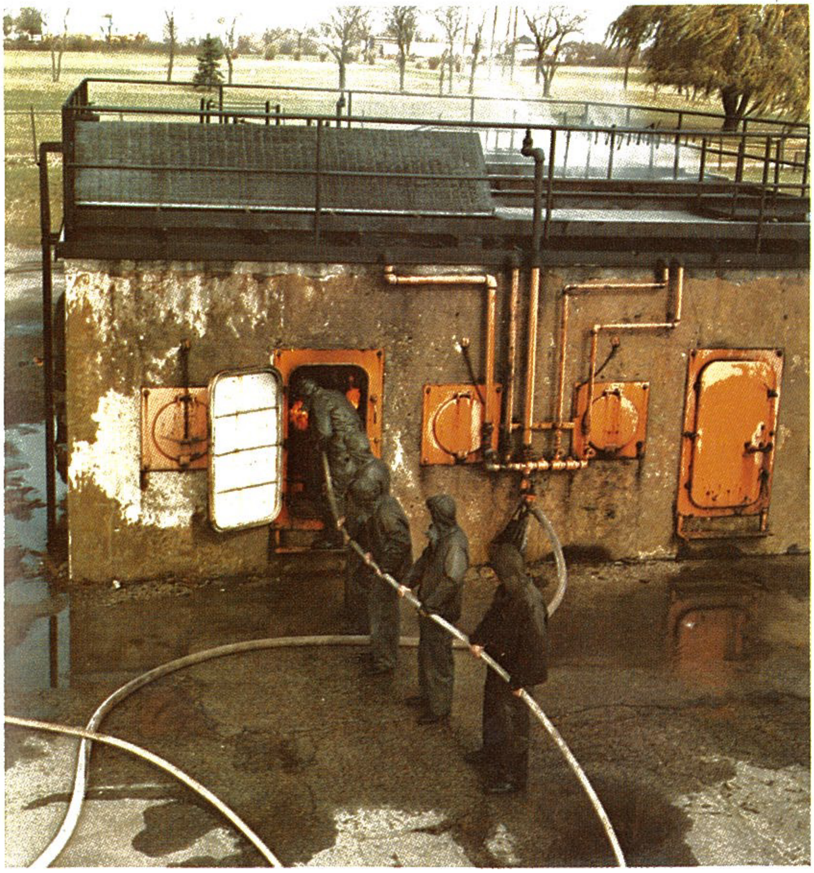
COLOR COMPANY FLAG— This flag is given at every graduation to the recruit company maintaining the highest overall average of efficiency in all aspects of training.

GAS MASK ORIENTATION

Putting on the mask

Getting ready to go in

"WOW, was that strong!"



"In we go"

DAMAGE CONTROL AND FIREFIGHTING

The mission of the Damage Control Training Division is to acquaint each recruit with the basic principles of extinguishing shipboard fires and controlling any storm or battle damage which his fighting unit may sustain.

Damage control training is accomplished both in the classroom and in structures designed to simulate a naval warship. Controlled oil fires are ignited in the "ships", and it is the task of the damage control team to actually enter the structure and extinguish the flames. All such training is conducted only under the strict supervision of a trained and experienced petty officer.

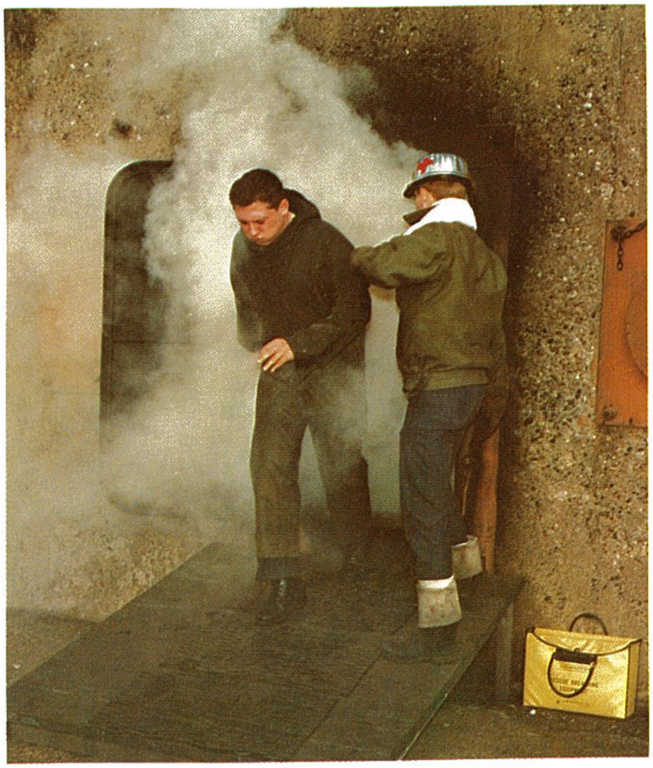
Instruction is also given on self-protection against nuclear, biological and chemical warfare.

As part of this training, each recruit puts on a gas mask and passes through a chamber filled with a harmless but obnoxious gas. While in the chamber he removes his gas mask briefly for a dramatic demonstration of the protection it provides.

Confidence is instilled in the recruit as a result of the damage control and firefighting instruction. Armed with training and the knowledge that shipboard fires can be extinguished and damage corrected, the Navyman may save many lives and keep his fighting unit afloat should disaster strike.

Demonstrating P.K.P. (Purple "K")

Sweeping the tank



"George" (The smoke house)

Demonstrating mechanical foam